

PSYCHOTHERAPY IN PSYCHIATRY

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Emotional relationship between the patient and the therapist is of extreme importance, demanding even from psychiatrists who are not primarily trained in psychotherapy to develop a psychotherapeutic approach to the patient, i.e. to acknowledge the patient's emotions with full understanding. In accordance with his or her education and orientation, the therapist can use a psychotherapeutic technique to treat the patient's disorder, which has been diagnosed by a psychiatrist during the first contact. It is well known that the fears, worries and uneasiness that the patient is displaying in addition to his or her symptoms, can be recognised and reduced through skilled treatment by the therapist (psychiatrist).

Psychotherapists are not necessarily psychiatrists. Psychologists, social workers, nurses, and others can perform psychotherapy, if they are qualified. Psychiatrists are trained in medicine and can prescribe drugs, while psychotherapists undergo series of specially designed training sessions after which they can be certified and licensed to perform psychotherapy. Commonly, an individual psychotherapist uses more than one method of treatment, although various schools of thought and training exist, and are often portrayed as quite distinct.

Two broad orientations can be recognised in psychotherapy: medical, and humanistic. The medical model is characterised by approaching the patient as a person who is ill, and the goal of therapy is improving health. The humanistic model is in principle non-medical, and approaches the person with a disorder in terms of modifying his or her behaviour through strengthening his or her inherent capacities and improving his or her adjustment to the environment.

The gist of criticisms aimed against psychotherapies is that there are no studies seriously comparing the efficacy and efficiency of various psychotherapeutic techniques. The Helsinki Psychotherapy Study is a randomised clinical trial in which the monitoring of patients is done throughout one year, and the assessment of treatment effects monthly.¹ This study is still in progress.

Contemporary research shows that the psychiatrists in USA have an increasing inclination towards biological psychiatry, which is a trend often related to the influence of pharmaceutical industry.

Psychotherapy has a long tradition in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and its present status can be appraised through the preliminary results of an ongoing study aimed to review the current educational trends and use of various psychotherapeutic approaches².

¹ Helsinki Psychotherapy study, <http://www.ktl.fi>

² Loga, S., Šošić, B.: Current status of psychotherapy in Bosnia and Herzegovina (in press).